

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the forgoing amendments and following remarks are respectfully requested.

Currently, claims 1-22, 30 and 31 remain pending in the present application, including independent claims 1 and 18. Claim 1 is directed to a vacuum apparatus in a papermaking machine, while claim 18 is directed to a system for transferring a running web from a first carrier fabric to a second carrier fabric. Both claims require a first auxiliary head positioned downstream from a primary head. The primary head and the first auxiliary head are both configured to apply reduced air pressure for application to a running web and transferring the running web from a first fabric to a second fabric.

In accordance with the present invention, the first auxiliary head is provided adjacent to and in fluid communication with a first edge of the running web. As now amended, both claims require the first auxiliary head to extend over only a portion of the web in the cross direction.

Support for the amendment can be found on page 14 of the present specification. The Examiners attention is also particularly directed to Figures 3 and 4 of the application.

As stated in the specification, the apparatus and system of the present invention allows for the transfer of a web from a first carrier fabric to a second carrier fabric with the use of relatively low transfer vacuum levels. As stated on page 9, the use of auxiliary pickup boxes positioned at one or more edges of the running web facilitates a relatively clean and reliable transfer of the entire running web from one carrier fabric to another. The application of the present invention may result in a superior product,

reduced energy costs, or more reliable production of product. The apparatus and system of the present invention are particularly well suited for transferring a web onto a highly topographical fabric.

In the Office Action, all of the pending claims were rejected in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,718,806 to Trokhan. Trokhan discloses a vacuum apparatus having a flow management device for controlling the rate of application of vacuum pressure. As stated in columns 9 and 10, Trokhan discloses a vacuum box that is designed to eliminate the formation of the vacuum seal between a belt and a web. In Figure 1, Trokhan shows a vacuum pick-up shoe 100 and a vacuum box 200. As opposed to the currently pending claims, however, the vacuum pick-up shoe and vacuum box extend across the entire width of the web. Thus, Trokhan fails to disclose or suggest an auxiliary head in fluid communication with at least the first edge of a running web that extends over only a portion of the web in the cross direction. As such, it is believed that the currently claims patently define over Trokhan.

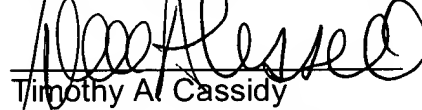
In the Office Action, the drawings were also objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.183(a) because they fail to show a reference numeral 29. Reference numeral 29, however, appears in Figure 2. As such, page 11 of the specification has been amended.

In summary, it is believe that the claims as currently amended patently define over the prior art of record and are in complete condition for allowance. Should any issues remain after consideration of this Response, however, then Examiner Fortuna is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned at his convenience.

Please charge any additional fees required by this Amendment to Deposit
Account No. 04-1403.

Respectfully submitted,

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